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A N
ORATION,

ON THE DEATH

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Mr. John Russell,

SENIOR SOPHISTER,

A T

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

Delivered November 25,

IN THE COLLEGE CHAPEL;

By WILLIAM BOYD.

B O S T O N :

PRINTED BY JOHN W. FOLSOM, FOR
THE AUTHOR.

M,DCG,XCV.

ORATION

OF THE

Mr. John Russell

SENIOR SOPHISTER

HARVARD UNIVERSITY



IN THE COLLEGE

BY WILLIAM BOYD

BOSTON

Printed by John W. Benson, for
the Author.

TO THE MEMBERS
OF
The Senior Class,
THIS ORATION.
IS
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY
Their obedient Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Cambridge, Nov. 27, 1795.

TO THE MEMBERS

OF

The Marine Club

THE MARINE CLUB



RESPECTFULLY REQUESTED



Thos. Hodgkin Esq.

THE MUSEUM

Cambridge Nov. 27. 1795.

LIST

*Of the present SENIOR SOPHISTERS,
at HARVARD UNIVERSITY;*

ALPHABETICALLY ARRANGED.

HENRY Abbot,

Thomas Barron,

Jotham Bender,

Charles Blanchard,

William Boyd,

Charles Cabot,

Charles Cushing,

Francis Dana,

Samuel Dana,

Wendell Davis,

Charles Davis,

Moses Everett,

Samuel Hunt,

James Jackson,

James Kendall,

Thomas Mason,

Leonard Morse,

John Pickering,

Benjamin Rice,

David Smiley,

Charles

6 A LIST OF NAMES, &c.

Charles P. Sumner,	William Wells,
Peter Thacher,	Francis Williams,
Nathan Tilton,	George Wingate,
Edmund Toppan,	John Winthrop,
William Tudor,	Leonard Woods,
John L. Tuttle,	Luther Wright.
Samuel Wells,	***

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ORATION, &c.

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THOUGH friendship and sympathy demand this tribute of esteem, in memory of departed worth ; yet sad and unwelcome is the task of calling your attention to the tale of mortality. Life, transient as the fleeting meteor of night, is still fondly admired, still hoped to last forever. Sanguine in expectation and elate

elate with fancied stability, we hear, untaught, the knell of keenest sorrow, and see, unconvinced, the mouldering turf which presses on the grave of youth. Blind to futurity, the passing moment flies unobserved, and as the cruel ravages of death approach more near, the delusive hope, that we are exempt from the common course of nature, is hugged still closer to the breast. Warmed with the enlivening glow of youth, we too often flatter ourselves that feeble age is the only victim to decay, and that the vernal morn of life is ever secure from the shafts of disease.

BUT alas ! how often do we see the fairest bud of expectation blasted before it's noon, while the silvered head of tired existence still trembles beneath the weight of years. How often does the glistening tear bedew the cheek of sensibility, when
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the pale daughter of affliction follows to the tomb, the object of her fondest care, the child of her affection, and the support of her declining age.

THOUGH nurtured on the lap of frailty, and crushed by the most trivial incident of life, we vainly boast ourselves of full blown joy and future prosperity. The smiles of fortune entrap the heart, while the gay pleasures of the world forbid reflection and banish the dictates of reason. When affluence pours around us its tide of plenty, when honours await our nod, and when friends encircle the table of our bounty, cruel, indeed, is the idea which damps our festivity, and bids us expect the solemn moment, when the sweets of society shall cease to claim, and the endearments of life shall fade forever from our view. This melancholy period, we too

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well know, is, inevitably, affixed to the nature of man. Born of his kindred earth, he creeps into existence, the feeble subject of misfortune ; and scarce does he taste the sweets of freedom, when the fatal stroke consigns him again to the shade of oblivion.

THE helpless state of infancy, the momentary period of human maturity, and the cold languor of age, loudly declare him mortal. Kings, patriots and slaves must pay the last sad debt of nature, and crumble to the same undistinguished heap of dissolution. The splendor of conquest and the dear bought laurel of fame protect not from the horrors of the tomb. There, the wretched child of infamy sleeps, undisturbed, by the side of faded glory, and the naked remains of a beggar repose on the same lap which supports the gilded casque of a hero.

THE

THE unerring shafts of death are ever on the wing. Domestic enjoyment is blasted by the cruel dispoiler, and social pleasures yield to the pang of woe. Beauty and innocence fall beneath the frown of fate ; friendship and love decay and die. Parental grief cannot resist the grim messenger of death ; the smiling prospect of future usefulness cannot avert the destined blow,

AMID the gay circle of thoughtless youth, when the young germe of merit puts forth it's earliest splendor, the grizzly tyrant, of more than adamant heart, enters, unseen, and crops the vernal flower.

How must it rive the heart of an indulgent parent, when the object of his warmest wishes and fondest expectations is snatched, forever, from his delighted view ! How must the feelings of a brother be wounded,

wounded, when the friend of his soul, the companion of his joys, whom artless sincerity had endeared, is torn from the arms of affection and hid in the cold embraces of the tomb !

WHEN useless age, fatigued with the dull round of existence, drops gently into dust, we pity the orphan, yet repine not at the blow. But, when the bud of promise, whose infant charms flattered the hope of future greatness, is blasted by the chill hand of death, apathy itself must sigh, sensibility must weep.

THIS, alas, was the melancholy fate of our once loved, but now no longer, brother. The dawn of merit opened with brightest beam. We saw the unfulfilled ray ; we admired the promised splendor. But ah, too soon the morning lowered ! the short lived glory fled !

RUSSELL

RUSSELL was the partner of our pleasures ; the worthy object of our esteem. Together we ranged the pleasing maze of science ; together unravelled the mysteries of art. From the same fountain we drew the salutary draught of instruction ; from the same source we tasted the purest sweets of refinement. Fortune seemed to smile on our honest exertions, and promise fruition, equal to our toils. The moment rapidly advanced, when we should have bidden an adieu to these sacred walls, and have entered on the broad based theatre of action. The sun had risen which would have lighted us through our collegiate course, and ushered us into life. But, ere meridian day, our joys were interrupted, our dearest hopes were blasted forever. Our friend was in the prime of life and activity ; but, he was like the morning flower, cut down at noon.

WHERE

WHERE now is the face which spoke the ingenuous heart? Where now the brother, the friend of our affections? Cold, alas, he lies on the lap of earth, soon, soon to be forgotten!

So far had he advanced in the preparatory course of study, that doubt itself almost ceased to fear, and sanguine relatives beheld the completion of their wishes. But, cruel reflection, while a mother's tender solicitude hoped his future worth, while fondest expectation welcomed him into active life, Omnipotence thought otherwise, fate frowned, and RUSSELL expired!

At the moment when nature called him man, and smiled with parental fondness on his early merit, remorseless disease attacked the springs of life and blasted the utopian view.

AN aged mother, pressed with a load
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of grief too great for utterance, bends, in silent woe, over the grave of her once dearest, but now departed pride.

A FRANTIC sister calls loudly on the friend of her inexperienced youth, whose tender care had won her esteem, whose fraternal fondness had secured her love. But in vain, he hears not her cries, he sees not the tears of her affection.

THE keen sorrow of a brother eloquently describes the passions of his soul, when the beloved companion of his younger sports is laid in the gloomy region of death.

SUCH is the scene which demands your warmest sympathy ; such the reflection which claims the genuine tear of pity.

BUT, I presume that your feelings are the most powerful orators on this melancholy occasion, and that they need no exertion of the speaker to awaken them.

I will, therefore, no longer continue the narration of those ideas, which your sensibility must, already, have suggested.

POSSESSED of a soul superior to deceit, Russell was unacquainted with the niggard arts of adulation, and to the mean devices of self interest he was equally a stranger. Guided by the purest dictates of honour, he never, willingly, deviated from the path of rectitude, nor was his honest bosom ever wounded by the gnawing pang of self reproach. Tenderly alive to compassion, he never raised the cruel laugh at another's cost, nor suffered malicious calumny to tremble on his tongue.

His eye was ever open to the virtues of others, while the veil of his charity concealed their foibles. Firm to his trust, he never disclosed the sacred deposit of friendship, nor was his sincerity ever wrecked

ed in the tide of passion. Malevolence was a stranger to his breast. Liberal, yet just, in his sentiments, he revered the disciple of virtue, though he despised the absurd formalities of bigotry. Benevolent in the highest degree, he censured with modesty, he praised with sincerity. Too virtuous to fear detraction, and too noble to seek unworthy revenge, he felt not the aspersions of envy, he forgave with pleasure. Ever awake to the duties of humanity, he anticipated the wants of distress, and lessened the weight of poverty by removing the cruel necessity of request.

BUT, alas, his merit and his virtue could not shield him from the stroke of fate.

WITH christian fortitude and resignation he bore the pains of a lingering disease, and when nature could no more, he languished into life.

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SINCE

SINCE then we know not the hour which shall call us to that world, from whose bourne no traveller returns, let us seize with eagerness the passing moment, nor quit it unimproved. Let virtue be our pole star, let reason guide our exertions. Then, when time shall, with us, cease, we'll bid a chearful adieu to the fading joys of life, and DIE to LIVE FOREVER !

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